

## **OSAC REVIEW / SPRING 2025 (OSAC = Organization of Scientific Area Committees)**

### **NAME OSAC UPDATE #15: ANSI/ASB Standard 159, First Edition, 2024**

#### **Standard for Scene Investigation and Reconstruction—Foundational Principles**

This Standard Guide was developed by the Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Consensus body of the AAFS Standards Board. (The draft was developed by the OSAC Crime Scene Investigation and Reconstruction Subcommittee, then was modified during the formal standards development process.) This is an extensive reference that advises on best practices. This standard is primarily directed to law enforcement, but has considerable overlap with the MDI community. It complements a document previously reviewed for NAME members: OSAC Proposed: 2022-N-0027 Medicolegal Death Investigation Response to Death Locations and Incident Scenes: Best Practice Recommendations.

*This is a brief summary of ANSI/ASB Standard for Scene Investigation and Reconstruction—Foundational Principles 159, and as such may leave out or misinterpret important details. **See link to full document (below).***

**Value:** Helpful reference in writing office policy on investigations, and for training medicolegal investigators.

**FORWARD:** *The Medicolegal Death Investigation Response to Death locations and Incident Scenes* best practices recommendations (cited above) mostly prescribes what categories of decedents, circumstances, and physical locations typically require MDI scene investigation. This *Standard for Scene Investigation and Reconstruction* is a very general overview of foundational principles in scene investigation. Because it is a standard, this document delineates requirements. This standard might be useful as an introductory document for training of MDIs.

**SCOPE:** Each scene is unique, and investigators must continually evaluate scene processing in order to safely preserve evidence and evidence context within the scene.

## **CONSIDERATIONS IN SCENE INVESTIGATION:**

1. Legal---an expectation that investigator work may become part of the legal process
2. Personnel Safety---PPE use (interesting, no mention of avoiding transfer of investigator DNA, etc. to scene.)
3. Scientific Reliability and Validity—Using reliable or validated techniques in gathering or preserving evidence.
4. Preserving Context—using documentation to preserve a record of what was collected, where evidence was collected, and in what condition it was found.
5. Maintain Evidence Integrity
6. Transparency—documentation of all actions, and any errors. Refraining from tasks, if not qualified
7. Managing Bias—recognizing sources of bias and remaining open to all hypotheses and potential evidence sources.

### **Full Document:**

<https://www.aafs.org/asb-standard/standard-scene-investigation-and-reconstruction-foundational-principles>